

ST. HELENS CHURCH, OLD CAMBUS

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I

THE ancient church of St. Helens, now a fragmentary relic, stands on a level sward above the cliffs of Greenheugh in the district of Old Cambus and the parish of Cockburnspath, Berwickshire. Stretched out to the North-West, as far as North Berwick Law, lies the indented coast of Lothian, alternate red cliff and silvery sanded bay. A little to the East rises the Bass Rock, sentinel of the Forth, and beyond it the blue-hazed hills of Fife. On such a fair prospect the earliest priest of Old Cambus was privileged to gaze. No chronicles survive to tell at what date the first religious settlement was made here, but it is just possible it long ante-dated the little Norman-built church. In Anglo-Saxon times the district was included in the province of Bernicia stretching from Tyne to Forth and constituting the northern province of the kingdom of Northumbria. In that period Old Cambus was an Anglian settlement, and the evangelizing activities of Christian missionaries may not have passed by this district which lay fairly in one of the main routes from South to North.

Edwin, King of Northumbria, was converted to Christianity by Bishop Paulinus in 627, and until his death some six years later was active in seconding the labours of the Bishop and his fellow missionaries. It has been suggested that the name "St. Helens" dates from his time. The statement is to be found that she was the favourite saint of the king, acquiring the honours of the pagan goddess Frau Hölle or Bircþa, the nature goddess of the Angles (both names meaning "bright lady"), and that foundations bearing her name at Condon on the Wall North West of Falkirk, at Lindean below Selkirk, at Darnick near Melrose, at Cornhill on Tweed and at Old Cambus mark stages in Edwin's conquest of the northern part of his territory.¹ In support of this engaging theory however no evidence is produced.

There is a well known popular rhyme which describes St. Helen as one of three sisters who planted churches in Berwickshire and East Lothian. It runs as follows :—

¹ Miss Russell of Ashiesteel, *Ber. Nat. Club Proc.*, Vol. 15, p. 189; Vol. 18, pp. 901-02.

“ St. Abbs, St. Helen and St. Bey
 All built churches to be nearest the sea :
 St. Abbs on the Nabs : St. Helens on the lea :
 St. Beys on Dunbar Sands stands nearest to the sea.”¹

This can only be a tale of late invention composed to explain the presence of three churches in adjoining districts all bearing the names of female saints.

The rock on which the romantic story splits is the distinction between the Celtic and Roman usages in their designation of religious establishments. The former did not dedicate to patron saints, but named churches after their founders. Hence St. Abbs, St. Beys, with St. Bothans, St. Boswells and others in Berwickshire belong to the period of Celtic missionary activity, which began with Aidan in 635 and ended at the Synod of Whitby in 664. The foundation of St. Helens cannot have fallen within this period for the Saint Helen is certainly the Roman Saint the mother of Constantine. Had she been of Anglian or Celtic race, contemporary with St. Ebba and St. Bey, her fame, in view of the number of churches bearing her name, must have been preserved in the pages of the historians.

While therefore a church may have existed at Old Cambus from the days of Aidan or his Iona successors, or at least from the time of Cuthbert, the probability is that the name St. Helens is contemporary with the Norman building whose ruins still remain. Certainly it is not earlier.

II

EARLY CHARTERS.

The name of Old Cambus first occurs in the written records in a Charter of King Edgar making a gift of “ the mains ” of the place to Durham. Its date is about 1100.²

Not until a century later does the church of Old Cambus receive mention. The earliest reference is in the following Charter of Roger, Bishop of St. Andrews (1188-1202), granted in 1199 or 1200. “ Roger, by the grace of God, etc., let all know that we have granted and by these presents confirm to God and blessed Cuthbert and to our dear sons the monks of Durham, that they shall hold in their own hand the Churches

¹ Local rhyme.

² Raine, *Appendix* 469: *History and Antiquities of North Durham*, with Appendix containing the Coldingham, etc., Charters preserved at Durham. Rev. J. Raine, 1852.

and Chapels they possess in the diocese of St. Andrews which we have designated by name, viz., Coldingham, Berwick, Ederham, Lamberton, Aldecambus, and Erchildun, on the decease of the parsons and without any other presentation being made they shall convert them to their own use in perpetuity."¹

This Charter possesses certain features of general as well as of local interest. It recalls the fact that Coldingham and its associated churches being dependent on Durham, but nevertheless within the realm of Scotland and the diocese of St. Andrews, were placed in a delicate situation. Not least so at the present juncture when the long and vexed question of the Scottish Church's independence had been but lately decided. By the Bull *Cum Universi* (1188) it had been finally emancipated from the claims of Canterbury and York and placed directly under the Roman See.

The problem then arose of the status of the churches of Durham in southern Scotland. In 1193 a compromise was arrived at, namely, that they should be free of taxes and episcopal dues exigible by St. Andrews, but that in respect of canonical jurisdiction and discipline the oversight of them should rest with the Scottish See. The Charter under consideration is a confirmation in respect of the churches named of this general agreement.

It is more significant however as exemplifying the vicious process of dilapidation of parishes by the assignation of their revenues to monastic houses, a process with far-reaching effects. In the first place it proved all but ruinous to the mediaeval church's parochial work. Of its ill effects Old Cambus is an outstanding example. When within a few years of its erection we find its endowments diverted to alien purposes it is not surprising to find the church's subsequent history bearing evidence of a precarious struggle for existence, more especially as at best the total revenues were exiguous. The story of all Scottish vicarial churches is similar.

The bearing of the process ultimately on the Reformation still invites study. Three things may be noted here. One consequence was that revenue derived from the teinds of Scottish lands was transmitted furth of the country to Rome or the mother monastic house, to the ever increasing outrage of patriotic sentiment. A second was the inability of the growing Scottish burgess class to appease their hunger for land since so large a

¹ Raine, *Appendix 469: History and Antiquities of North Durham*, with Appendix containing the Coldingham, etc., Charters preserved at Durham, by Rev. J. Raine, 1852. A volume whose value for Ecclesiastical History and Antiquities has passed almost unnoticed: an unequalled repository of mediaeval Latin terms: the potential source-book of numerous local histories, and in particular of the great Priory of Coldingham, an account of which more complete than that of any other religious house in Scotland waits to be extracted from its ample pages.

proportion was firmly held by the Church. The "bonnet laird" was a product, and not the least significant of the Reformation. Thirdly, the agricultural lowland Scot possessed a strong parochial instinct which was severely repressed, *quoad sacra*, by the depreciation of his parish church. The extent to which this repression was felt may be gauged by the rapidity of the revival of the parochial system at the Reformation.

The Charter of Roger shows the church of Old Cambus to have been in existence by 1200, but there is no evidence of the exact date of erection. The architectural style points to the latter half of the twelfth century, and it is probably correct to assign it to a date towards the end of that period. In the closing years of the century certain lands of Old Cambus passed by excambion into the hands of Durham and Coldingham, and there occurred pious gifts of other acres which placed practically all the district in possession of the two religious houses. The presence of the church might have encouraged the acquisitions, or *vice versa*.

About the year 1200, in pursuance of the liberty given by Bishop Roger, Prior Bertram of Durham assigned the corn tithes of Old Cambus to the monks of Farne Island.¹ The two incumbents of this small establishment enjoyed the endowment until at least 1298,² but had been deprived of it by 1357, the first year for which the accounts of Farne Monastery are available.³

III

As we have said, during the first period of its existence Old Cambus was a vicarage of Durham. The first incumbent of whom mention survives, and he may have been the first priest of the new church, was one Peter, Vicar of Old Cambus. Nothing but his name remains, and the Charter to which he was a witness is undated. Its date however is near 1200.⁴

At some time between 1214 and 1233, and probably nearer the former date, Prior Radulph of Durham granted the altar offerings of the church to William of Mitford on his appointment as Vicar.⁵ He was evidently an Englishman, and his name occurs frequently as a witness to charters in subsequent years, to only one of which is a date attached, viz., 1249.⁶

¹ Raine, *Appendix* 712.

² *Surtees Society Priory of Coldingham*, 1841. *Appendix* XCIX.

³ Raine, *North Durham*, p. 344.

⁴ Raine, *Appendix* 179.

⁵ Raine, *Appendix* 541.

⁶ Raine, *Appendix* 371.

The name of Hugh, parson of Old Cambus, occurs in the Ragman Roll as one of those who swore fealty to Edward I at Berwick in 1296. He is the last incumbent prior to the Reformation, of whom any mention survives.

As regards the stipends of the clergy the Scottish Conciliar Statutes of the middle of the thirteenth century provided that " Vicars of churches shall have a sufficient and respectable maintenance . . . so that the stipend of a vicar, net and free after all burdens have been deducted, shall amount at least to ten marks (£6 13 4) " ; but there follows the ominous proviso : " if the resources of the church shall suffice for this."

For a century at least the vicarage of Old Cambus approximated to this standard. The earliest valuation is that called the *taxatio antiqua* made during the reign of William the Lion (1165-1214) which extended to all dioceses. It shows the church of Old Cambus to be reckoned at fifteen marks or £10, and this appears to be the vicarage value.¹

About 1275 the first payment was made of the tenths of benefices as valued by Boiamund or Bagimont, a Papal commissioner. This valuation, known as Bagimont's Roll, was, despite strenuous opposition, eventually held to supersede the *taxatio antiqua* and became the basis of valuation of Church lands down to the Reformation. In it the rectory of Old Cambus appears as worth £10 and the vicarage £8 3 4.²

A later valuation of the Papal tenths, as conceded by Pope Nicholas to Edward I about 1294, shows some variation from the foregoing, the rectorial assessment of Old Cambus being £10 13 4 and the vicarage £10 10.³

It must not be supposed that the values shown above represented the stipend of the vicar. As clearly appears from the following inquest certain statutory burdens were first deductible from the gross vicarage revenues. The interesting document, which is the only one of the kind relating to Old Cambus church, may be given in full :—" An inquest made at Old Cambus regarding the true value of its vicarage by the subscribed jurors, viz., Master Hugo of Mordington Chaplain,⁴ Walter of Prendergust, who declare on oath that the ascertained value of all belonging to

¹ *Registrum Prioratus S. Andree*. Bannatyne Club, 1841, pp. 31, 32.

² Bagimont's Roll. *Theiner Vetera Monumenta*. Rome, 1864, p. 109.

³ *Coldingham Priory Accounts*, etc., *Surtees Society*, 1841. *Appendix* cviii. The Prior of Coldingham was on this occasion collector for the Archdeaconry of Lothian.

⁴ Of Coldingham.

the vicarage scarcely reaches seventeen marks, out of which has to be paid the stipend of the priest, the procuration of the archdeacon,¹ and the synod dues; besides there are the lights and other articles to be found for the church."² It would seem therefore that only with considerable difficulty could the vicar obtain his minimum salary of ten marks, although as will be noticed that the seventeen marks of gross valuation mentioned here is considerably above the average of preceding assessments.³

IV

Another valuation of Old Cambus survives which is the earliest document of the kind relating to Scotland. It appears to have been compiled immediately after the Battle of Falkirk (1298), and to have had as one of its main objects the ascertaining of the names of the tenants in the Barony of Coldingham who had espoused the side of their country against England.⁴ Though its reference to the church is but incidental it is a valuation of church lands, and as such and in view of its unique character it deserves reproduction in full.

"The Prior (of Durham) has in Old Cambus his manor with two ploughgates of land in the barony: eight bovates make a ploughgate: thirteen acres a bovat. These ploughgates are assessed at £1 13 4. There are in the same place seven acres of meadow (*prati*), of which four acres can be scythed in any year and are worth 6d. an acre. Three acres cannot be scythed. Separate pasture is worth 14/9 per annum. A quantity of heath and waste is ignored. There is there a special right of digging turf for fuel for the manor. Heather⁵ is assessed at 2/-. The Mill is assessed at £2 13 4. There is a church which is in the hands of the Master of Farne in his own use. There are thirty bovates of land of which twenty two bovates are assessed at 2/6, and eight bovates are in the hands of

¹ A sum payable on a visitation by this cleric towards his expenses.

² Raine, *Appendix** 193. The inquest is undated, but is probably of the middle of the 14th century.

³ In order to estimate the maintenance value of the minimum vicarial stipend cf. the following average maintenance allowances for the period c. 1250:—

Peasant farmer and family	£3 per annum.
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Benefice in the diocese of Norwich	£11 do.
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Maintenance of a knight	£15 land.
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—G. G. Coulton, "The Mediaeval Village," p. 78.

⁴ Cf. *Coldingham Priory Accounts*, etc. *Surtees Society*, 1841. Preface, p. xi.

⁵ For thatching purposes.

Master Thomas of Bamburgh and make no return. The cottage of the smith with one acre is worth $1/6$ per annum. There are ten broken down cottages each assessed at 6d. There are four cottages worth 15d. per annum. One toft with one acre and the 'Delves' with the brewhouse is worth 8/- per annum. One toft with three acres of land is worth 3/- per annum. One toft with two acres of land is worth $1/6$ per annum. Brewhouse and bakehouse with one acre pertaining to them are worth $13/4$.¹ The common corn-kiln returns nothing to the Prior. The common brewhouse is assessed at 2/- per annum. The wife of Ada of Lamberton holds one toft with two and a half acres of land worth 5/-. Enquiry to be made regarding forfeit. John Ford has one bovat and one toft worth $1/6$ —Forfeited. Matthew Crak has one bovat and one toft worth $1/6$ —Enquiry to be made. Nicolaus de Bradby has one toft and one bovat worth $1/6$ —Enquiry to be made. Master —, son of Robert, has one toft and one bovat worth $1/6$ —Enquiry to be made. Summa £13 2 8."²

The interest of the foregoing for the details of contemporary village life it affords is apparent. It will be noticed for example that not only were the tenants thirled as in later times to the mill of the manor, but were also bound to bring their grain to the common brewhouse and bakehouse to have it turned into ale and bread.

If the suggestion is correct that the valuation was partly intended to discover the tenants who had taken arms against Edward I it may be that the forfeitures mentioned constituted the penalty for the offence. Apparently therefore the inhabitants of Old Cambus, despite their close connection with the English, were not lost to patriotic sentiment, and in John Ford, who is noted as having been already forfeited, we may have the name of one of the heroes who bled with Wallace.

V

Little can be gathered concerning the fortunes of Old Cambus during the fourteenth century, but it may be conjectured that it suffered much from the unsettled state of the country. Mention of it is found during the energetic administration of William Lamberton, Bishop of St. Andrews from 1298 to 1328. He visited Coldingham about 1312 and discovered certain defects and abuses, not specified, but probably connected with

¹ An earlier reference to the "bakehouse of Old Cambus" is found in a charter of 1214 when the sum of 10/- from its revenues was ordered to be applied to the stipend of a chaplain of Coldingham church who was to celebrate masses daily for the dead. *Coldingham Priory Accounts*, etc. *Surtees Society*, 1841. No. 238.

² *Rentale Antiquum de redditibus, tenementis in Scotia*. *Surtees*, 1841. Appendix, p. xcix.

Prior William de Gretham's flight to Durham when he abstracted valuable vestments and books from the Priory.¹

At the same time Lamberton compounded with Durham for procurations due to St. Andrews from the churches of Newton and Nenthorn in Berwickshire of which only a small proportion had been paid in the preceding twenty years, Durham having apparently claimed the bulk. In lieu and in reparation he imposed a levy of £20 on Ercildoun, Old Cambus and Upsetlington—all Durham churches—and a similar sum to be paid by Coldingham annually during the truce.² It was an illegal levy, and is interesting as indicative of the first attempt of the Scottish See to gain complete possession of the Durham churches north of the Tweed.

The only remaining references to Old Cambus occur in certain accounts of the period. Three of these are of Robert de Walworth, Prior of Coldingham, for the year 1365 and two subsequent years. In the first the manors of Fishwick, Edrom and Old Cambus paid to the Priory a sum of £41 16 8. This declined next year to £31 10, but in 1370 rose to £53 6 8. The separate contributions are not shown. It may be that the middle year's small payment reflects the losses inflicted on the parishes by Border warfare. The discrepancy is too great to represent merely a fluctuation in agricultural prices.³

The remaining account concerns Old Cambus exclusively and is that of Simon de Levynghorp, sacrist of Coldingham, procurator of the Prior of Durham in Scotland. It is a receipt for the great teinds of Old Cambus church from the year 1366 to the year 1368. The respective figures are £3 6 8, £2 13 4, and £2 3 3. It will be noted that these teinds were by this time no longer in the use of the Master of Farne, but were paid direct into the treasury of Durham. The decline in their value is also striking. In the best of these years they amount to exactly one-half of the valuation of Bagimont less than a century earlier.⁴

There appears in this account a note of the only outlay ever recorded in respect of the fabric of Old Cambus church. It is as follows:—"In repair of the windows in Old Cambus Church 12/-. In repair of Old Cambus Church 10/6."

15TH CENTURY.

In 1444 a Papal Mandate to the Abbot of Melrose bore as follows:—

¹ *Registrum Palat. Dunelm.*, Vol. I., p. 411.

² Raine, *Appendix* 583. A truce was established in 1309, and its existence explains the Bishop's visitation as far as Upsetlington and Berwick-on-Tweed.

³ *Coldingham Priory Accounts*, etc. *Surtees Society*, 1841. Appendix xxxviii xlii, 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Appendix xlii.

“ The recent petition of John, Prior of the Benedictine Priory of Coldyngham in the diocese of St. Andrews, contained that in the place of Aldecambus in the said diocese (whose parish church is appropriated to the said Priory, and from whose fruits, etc., a fit portion is assigned for the support of a perpetual vicar), on account of war, barrenness, etc., and on account of the diminution of the said portion and of the fewness of the parishioners, no vicar had for many years resided and no divine offices are celebrated, whereby divine worship is almost entirely abandoned : at the said petition for the appropriation of the vicarage of the church, in which there are at present not more than six parishioners, to the said Priory, and for the exercise of the cure by a priest appointed and removed at the pleasure of the Prior, the Pope orders the above, if the above be found true, viz., to appropriate in perpetuity the vicarage to the said Priory, value not exceeding £2 and £100 respectively, so that on the resignation or death of the present vicar the Prior may take possession and have the cure exercised by any priest appointed and removed at his pleasure.”¹

Old Cambus had thus passed from Durham entirely into the hands of Coldyngham. To some degree its declension can be attributed to separation from the powerful and wealthy mother-house. But other factors were present which doubtless afforded more immediate cause. The most potent of these was the wasted condition into which the Border country was brought in the forty or more years prior to the date of the above ordinance. Old Cambus and the adjacent country suffered from the turbulence of the period in a special degree. The defection of the Earls of March and Dunbar to England at the beginning of the century and the subsequent numerous campaigns and counter-campaigns which had their territory for their main objective brought the district to a state of utter desolation. Later the contentions of the Homes, who possessed themselves of the lands of Coldyngham, and held them for a time against every authority of the day, spiritual and temporal, aggravated the situation, if that were indeed possible. If the statement above is accurate that the population of the pleasant and fertile parish of Old Cambus was reduced to six, or as it may be, six heads of families, then the destruction must have been of a nature beyond present day imagining.

How the church survived we can only conjecture, but it may be supposed that the Homes, once fairly possessed of Old Cambus, had an interest in preserving it and maintaining ordinances in it. An interesting point is the probability, from architectural considerations, that the west wall of the building was erected at this time. No further mention however of Old Cambus occurs in the written records within the remaining century

¹ *Calendar of Papal Registers*, ix. pp. 471-472.

of the ancient church's regime, and to its brief reappearance at the beginning of the Reformation period we have now to turn.

VI

REFORMATION ERA.

In the early years of the Reformation the lack of ordained clergy was met by the appointment of exhorters and readers in many charges. The former, as the title implies, were permitted to exercise the gifts of preaching they possessed, but both classes were placed under the supervision of the minister of a neighbouring parish. In time however the zealous care of the Reformers to maintain a regularly qualified ministry led to the suppression of the order of exhorters, and services conducted by readers were strictly confined to the reading of scripture and prayers and to praise.

Of the Reformed incumbents of Old Cambus, of whom the scanty surviving details are given below, the first was a reader, John Wood, who served from at least 1574 until probably 1580. His name alone survives in the list of clergy drawn up in the former year, together with the value of the charge, viz., £16 and the Kirkland, or £20 in all per annum.¹

Concerning his successor, David Home, more is recorded since he became a determined protagonist of Presbyterianism against the Episcopalian enactments of James VI in 1584.²

Appearing first as minister of Foulden in 1567 he was translated to Oldhamstocks in 1569. At this time he had the churches of Cockburnspath and Old Cambus also under his care. He remained at Oldhamstocks until 1580 when he removed to Old Cambus, and there he spent the next five years. In 1585 he was translated to the neighbouring parish of Coldingham where he remained until his death which occurred at some time before 1600.

In 1585 Home was forced to flee to Berwick to escape a charge of treason, so prominent were his activities in opposition to Episcopacy. He is the author in a letter of this period written to James Carmichael, minister at Haddington, of a well known anecdote relating to King James. "The king," he wrote, "is become very ill; I will say no worse. For being at the hunting when he came home he drank to all his dogs. Among the rest he had one called Tell True, to whom he spoke thir words: 'Tell

¹ *Fasti*.

² The "Black Acts" establishing Episcopacy as the order of Church government.

True, I drink to thee above all the rest of my hounds, for I will give thee more credence than either the Bishop or Craig.' ”¹

Home returned to his parish after a few months and had the boldness to attend the Assembly of 1586, at whose sessions James was present each day. On his being nominated as a member of the Convention or Business Committee the King started up and exclaimed, “ I have something to lay to that man’s charge.” Thereupon Alexander Home, minister of Dunbar, was chosen in his stead.²

Home’s successor in Old Cambus was James Lamb. He was originally a reader in Tynninghame (1576) and North Berwick (1578). Ordained to Oldhamstocks in 1585 he spent less than a year there before being transferred to Old Cambus. His stay here was also brief, and his translation to Bolton in the Presbytery of Haddington took place in 1587. He had the curious and perhaps unique experience of being actually translated to the Church of St. Marys of the Lowes, Yarrow, and ministering there for some six months without formal institution and then returning to his former parish where he ended his days. This was in 1600. He died the Father of the Church in 1640 aged 83 years.

Alexander Watson, M.A., was the next incumbent of Old Cambus. He had been previously schoolmaster of Coldingham, and was admitted to Old Cambus in 1591. Like his predecessors he stayed only for a short period, and removed to Coldingham in 1593. In 1609 he appeared as a witness in the trial of the notorious Logan of Restalrig for forfeiture for high treason in connection with the Gowrie Conspiracy. Logan’s stronghold of Fast Castle lay within the parish of Coldingham.³

Thomas Hepburn, minister of Oldhamstocks (1586-1629), had charge of Old Cambus church during the years 1593 and 1594. He was the son of Thomas Hepburn, a former minister of Oldhamstocks.⁴ In 1599 he suffered deposition at the hands of the Synod for not submitting to its authority in the matter of a dispute regarding stipend he became involved

¹ *Woodrow Miscellany*, Correspondence of James Carmichael. The Bishop was Patrick Adamson, Archbishop of St. Andrews, and “ Craig ” was John Craig, successively minister of Holyrood, St. Giles, Montrose, and St. Nicholas, Aberdeen. He played the part of mediator between the extreme Presbyterians under Melville and the King. In 1562 he was one of the ministers appointed to preach in the unplanted Kirks of the Merse.

² Calderwood : *History*, Vol. iv, p. 583. Woodrow Society.

³ Watson’s name appears as witness to a Deed, 20th February, 1592-93. *Laing Charters*, 1257.

⁴ A kinsman of the Earl of Bothwell, husband of Mary Queen of Scots. Two days after Mary’s marriage to Bothwell he is said to have received the Casket Letters, but was seized and the Casket and its contents taken. *Fasti*.

in with John Lauder, minister of Cockburnspath.¹ His father above mentioned appears to have been no more amenable to discipline in spiritual than his son in material affairs, and holds the distinction of being the only Reformed heretic. He denied that, as the Shorter Catechism later put it, "the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory." It does not appear that he taught a doctrine of Purgatory, but only of the delayed consummation of blessedness until Judgment Day.² He was deposed for this fault by the Synod, but was reinstated, and was minister of Oldhamstocks at his death in 1585. Thomas Hepburn younger died in 1629.

The two succeeding ministers of Old Cambus are little more than names. Alexander Lumsden graduated Master of Arts in St. Andrews University in 1591 and was admitted to the parish in 1595. He was translated to Hutton before 1599 where he died in 1607 at an early age. Thomas Bonar, also a graduate of St. Andrews, succeeded in 1599. He was presented by James VI to the vicarage of Simprin in the year 1606, and died there before 1632.

VII

Bonar was the last minister of the independent parish, for while the formal annexation to Cockburnspath did not take place till 1610 John Lauder, the minister of that parish was, in 1607, made responsible for both charges.

At this date a manse existed at Old Cambus, and there is mention of it and a glebe at a time much later. Reference has been made also to the Kirklands out of which part of the minister's stipend was payed. All trace of the situation of these is lost, but doubtless all lay within the area of cultivated land that presently adjoins the church.

At a valuation of the teinds made in 1634 by a Royal Commission it was found that the victual teind of the mains and town extended to some thirty-five chalders, and the value of the lands of Fast Castle amounted to £733 16 8 Scots. One fifth of these amounts was declared to be the worth of the parsonage teind yearly.³

In the same year a process of augmentation was raised at the instance of George Sydserf, minister of Cockburnspath, and "serving the cuir

¹ MSS. *Edinburgh Synod Minutes*.

² *Apologetical Narration*: Rev. William Scott. Woodrow Society.

³ Register House. MSS. Teind Papers.

and having the charge of the administratioun of the word and sacramentis at the Kirke of Oldcambus and visitatioun of the seeke therat." Nothing had been paid formerly to the minister of Cockburnspath from Old Cambus, while the church there was "more faschous and troublesome than Cockburnspath in respect of the distance of the place." Augmentation accordingly was claimed, or else that the church might be disjoined again from Cockburnspath and the minister set free of the charge. The Commissioners chose to adopt the former course and "did eik and augment to the minister" twenty four bolls of victual from Old Cambus teinds.¹

That the last had not been heard however of the proposal to disjoin Old Cambus appears from an interesting document which is an extract from ancient minutes of the Presbytery of Dunbar that are now lost.²

The document may be given *in extenso* :

"The Presbytery recommend by thir writs to the Commission of Parliament for the plantation of Kirks the disjoining of Ald Cambus fra the Kirke of Cockburnespeth and the erecting thereof in ane new Kirk as befor; as also that the Kirk be situated in the maist commodious place for the said parochine of Ald Cambus, alia callit Sainct Ellen's Kirk, be advyse of Presbyterie and parochie. Extract out of the Presbyterie booke by me, [Mr. Arthur Forbes, at the command of the Presbyterie. At Dunbar, 18th February 1650.]³

Heir follows the Presbyterie's reasons for the disjunction :—

1. The length of the parochie of Cockburnespeth is four myles and the breadth twa myles and ane halfe.
2. The Kirke is situate neir the north west neuk of the parochie.
3. The number of communicants above sevin hundred persounes.
4. The King is patron.
5. The present provisioune is fyve chalders and ane halfe of victual and thrie hundred merks of money; the minister furnishes the communion elements. Some of the teinds are drawin and some are not valued.

¹ Register House. MSS. Teind Papers.

² The Extant Minutes of Dunbar Presbytery date from 1652.

³ Arthur Forbes, Clerk of Dunbar Presbytery: admitted to Pitsligo about 1640: translated to Innerwick, East Lothian, 19th July, 1646: transferred to Fraserburgh, 27th June, 1652, the Presbytery of Dunbar conceiving him to be "of too sweet a nature for so perverse a people" (as those of Innerwick). *Fasti*.

Whether he took away the Presbytery Minute Book, now lost, or whether it was mislaid in the confusion and flight of ministers from East Lothian during Cromwell's invasion cannot now be known.

6. Some affirm that Cockburnespeth is a Kirke of the Abbacie of Sainct Bothans, uthers that it was a pendicle of Aldhamstocks. Efter the Reformatioun it was erected in a paroche Kirk about the yeir 1609 and thereafter the paroche Kirk of Aldcambus was united with it at the desyre of my Lord Home, heritor, and ane Papist, be the latte Bishop of Sainct Androis for worldly ends. It is verie needful that the barounie of Aldcambus belonging now to the laird of Wauchton be disjointed fra Cockburnespeth, having the Peathes, a steip and straitt way and a watter to crosse, and erected in ane paroche Kirk as it was befor, when there were twa hundred and fourtie communicants fra Cockburnespeth and about sixtie fra Newtoun, Dowlaw, Fastcastell and Calsyde in the same barounie fra Coldingham, in all about thrie hundred communicants, and set to this Kirk of Ald Cambus callit Sainct Ellen Kirk, where there is yet ane Kirk standing plenished with pulpit, seatts, and ane Kirkyaird. There is also ane manse possessed be the minister of Cockburnespeth forby, and ane gleib possessed be Wauchton.¹

There is payed out of the barounie of Aldcambus to the minister of Cockburnespeth fiftie twa bolls victual quhilk may be refundit to him out of the lands of Cockburnespeth quhilk are large enough.

This disjunction was earnestly petitioned for to the Presbyterie both be the people and heritors, and are longing for it this day."²

The petition desired with so much unanimity was heard of no more, being set aside doubtless during the troubles of the Cromwellian invasion. The information it conveys regarding the state of the Church is surprising in view of its forty years conjunction with Cockburnspath at this date. It cannot have been allowed to fall into disuse, but worship must have been conducted in it regularly. This is substantiated by the recurring notices of marriages celebrated within it during the years 1642 to 1646.³

Henceforward notice of the church disappears completely until modern times. A lingering tradition that it was utilized by Cromwell's soldiery may have some element of truth and it may have suffered such damage then as to render it unfit for ecclesiastical purposes.

¹ A later reference to the glebe occurs in Dunbar Presbytery Minutes, Vol. I, folio 116, 1656.

² Register House, MSS. *Ecclesiastical Papers*, No. 73.

³ *Cockburnspath Parish Registers*. Register House.

VIII

ARCHITECTURE.

The present relics of the building are unimposing. Almost as much of the walls stands now underground as can be seen above, and the latter portion proceeds slowly to decay. While the masonry is good the stones generally are of a soft character and liable to weathering. The west gable, which, however, is of least architectural interest, is almost intact, but it must soon succumb under the conditions of a peculiarly exposed situation.

The size of the church was small and proportionate to the circumscribed and scantily populated area it served.

A nave some thirty feet in length was reckoned sufficient to accommodate the congregation and the altar stood in a chancel just half as large. Both were barrel vaulted. A broad arch marked the junction of nave and chancel, richly decorated with chevron mouldings and resting on fine clustered-column pillars. The chancel was illumined by a single window, a tiny light no more than a foot wide to the exterior and there shaped to a pointed arch-head, but semi-circular within and splayed out to form a deep recess in the yard thick wall.¹ In the east end of the ruined south wall and close to the ground is a plain square edged segmental headed recess some six feet wide and nine inches deep, and immediately to the east of this another of bisected form with its crown abutting on the wall of the chancel arch. These recesses are not easily explained since they appear too narrow to have held recumbent effigies, and they are too wide for sedilia, moreover they are not repeated in the north wall of the nave. Of the original west end of the building nothing remains, since the present west wall was rebuilt probably in the fifteenth century. It was re-erected from the ground level, and it is not unlikely that in its place a tower originally stood.²

¹ Shown in a drawing reproduced in Carr's "History of Coldingham," 1836, but now destroyed.

² The architecture of St. Helens is most fully and accurately described in Muir T. S. *Old Church Architecture in the Mainland and West Islands of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1861. See also McGibbon & Ross *Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland*, 3 vols., Edinburgh, 1896. *Berwickshire Inventory. Proceedings of Society of Scottish Antiquaries*, Vol. 12, 1913-14. Article Alan Reid, F.S.A.Scot., p. 212. Carr's *History of Coldingham*.

